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V E R S E S

ADDRESSED TO

MRS. S I D D O N S,

ON HER BEING ENGAGED AT

THE THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE, IN 1782.

By the REVEREND MR. W H A L L E Y,

AUTHOR OF

EDWY and EDILDA, FATAL KISS, &c. &c. &c.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

M,DCC,LXXXII.

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.

V E R S E S

ADDRESSED TO

Mrs. S I D D O N

THE THEATRE-ROYAL, DEKLY-LAND, 1752.

By the Reverend Mr. W H A L L E Y.

EDWY and EDILDA, FATAL KISS, &c. &c. &c.

L O N D O N

PRINTED FOR T. CADDILL, IN THE STRAITS.



PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX PENCE

DEDICATION.

DEAR MADAM,

ACCEPT as a *public offering*, a trifle which was long since presented to you as a *private tribute* of friendship. Your talents, and your worth have secured it a partial acceptance with the world. Forgive the vanity which prompts me to make known that I have been, at once, the *Friend*, and *Prophet* of your Fame ; and believe me, with perfect esteem,

Your faithful,

And most obedient Servant,

T. S. WHALLEY.

D E D I C A T I O N

DEAR MARY

ACCEPT as a small offering a
trifle which was long since presented to you as
a private token of friendship. Your talents
and your worth have secured it a partial accep-
tance with the world. I give the rest with
prompts me to make known that I have been
at once, the friend, and protector of your
Fame; and believe me, with perfect
esteem,

Your faithful

And most obedient servant,

T. S. W. HALL

V E R S E S, &c.

AROUND her antient head the hand of Night
Had thrown the veil that shuts out chearful light ;
Rein'd her black steeds, and solemn journey'd on,
Wrapt up in awful clouds, save where the moon,
Through their dun fleeces, thrust her shining face,
Silvering their curling edges with her rays,
And, mounted bright upon Night's ebon brow,
Cast her pale lustre on the world below :
Thro' the tall grove no sounds assail'd the ear,
But such as gloomy Grief might wish to hear,
The distant surge that dash'd against the shore,
The humming winds, and torrents fullen roar ;

B

While

While from some blasted branch the dusky owl,
 At pauses, made Night's fearful concert full,
 As shrill she answer'd, with her ominous throat,
 To the deep cadence of the Death-bell's note.

Such was the solemn scene where, sunk in shade,
 Beneath a rock MELPOMENE was laid,
 In silent sorrow, reckless of repose,
 And wooing every thought that fed her foes.
 Rent, and disorder'd was her fable stole ;
 One elbow prest on her inverted bowl,
 Help'd her fair hand to prop her drooping head,
 From her sunk eye, the lofty look was fled ;
 Nor, as of old, sat Resolution now,
 With all his noble darings on her brow.
 Her other listless hand her dagger shew'd
 Deprest to earth, and guiltless long of blood,
 And by her sighs, and gushing tears alone,
 The once majestic charmer had been known.

At

At length, her silence the sweet mourner broke,
Her tresses wildly waving as she spoke :

- “ Why have I liv’d to feel this deadly blow,
“ And see my boasted triumphs sunk so low ?
“ Why have I liv’d to see my cypress crown
“ Trod under foot, and on my awful throne
“ An upstart Mimic plac’d, whose tricks disgrace
“ My antient dignities, and high-born race ?
“ Why have I liv’d to see my moral page
“ Scorn’d and insulted by a trifling age,
“ And sneering ridicule unseemly drest
“ In the full honors of my flowing vest ?
“ Thalia too, to fill up all my woes !
“ Unnaturally joins my mortal foes ;
“ Forgets the manners, once assum’d to please,
“ Her chasten’d spirit, and her polish’d ease ;
“ And revels ’midst the crowd of Farce’s tools,
“ Of ~~Jesters~~ Jesters, Dancers, Harlequins, and fools ;

“ Poorly

" Poorly to flatter a degenerate race,
 " And sink my pow'r in laughter, and disgrace !
 " There *was* a time, when my exalted mien
 " Charm'd every age, and rul'd the splendid scene ;
 " When, grac'd by me, fair Virtue found the art
 " To win the palm of praise, from every heart :
 " There *was* a time, but ah ! that time's no more !
 " When every noble bosom own'd my pow'r ;
 " When my great emprise rous'd each generous mind,
 " My sentiments each feeling soul refin'd ;
 " When my pathetic scenes, like magic, mov'd,
 " And every heart grew tender, whilst I lov'd ;
 " When slumb'ring terrors waken'd with my look,
 " And my deep tones the guilty conscience shook ;
 " When, with a caustic pow'r, my words cou'd boast
 " Their healing influence, where they burnt the most ;
 " And, like my Elenora's lips, were found
 " To draw the latent poison from the wound !

" But

" But lost is all my glory, all my pride,

" And all my trophies fell, when Garrick died!"

Scarce had the lovely mourner, weeping, spoke,
 When on her ear intemperate laughter broke,
 And, thro' the grove, the numerous flambeaus light,
 Chac'd the gigantic shades of frowning Night.
 A thousand antics quickly fill'd the place,
 Led on by *drunken* Humour, and Grimace ;
Unmeaning Mirth, light Folly, flippant Jest,
Distorted Fashion, with her tawdry vest ;
 False Taste, with all her fopperies, and lace,
 Pert Affectation, the wry Imp of Grace.
 Sly Mimick'ry, and gay Burlesque were there ;
 And Lynx-ey'd Ridicule brought up the rear ;
 Who, as the motley rout with dance, and song,
 And noisy peals, past, revelling, along,
 Spied out of each the vulnerable part,
 And long'd to pierce it with his poison'd dart.

High in the 'midst, upon a gaudy car,
 Which painted dragons *seem'd* to wing thro' air,
 The Comic Muse appear'd, and by their side,
 Was plac'd the Sorceress Farce, in all her pride ;
 Who, ever, and anon, wou'd steal a grace
 From the arch sweetness of Thalia's face ;
 But, in return, her own fantastic air,
 Grimace, and wanton fooleries, grafted there.
 Twelve chequer'd Harlequins the chariot bore,
 Twelve frisky Colombines tript light before ;
 With whom, of Farce's favourites, a throng,
 Buffoons, Clowns, Drunkards, Tumblers, prest along.
 Full in the front of the afflicted maid,
 The ill-match'd pair their wild procession staid ;
 When, winking on the part'ner of her throne,
 To the sad Muse, Thalia thus begun :

“ Why quits Melpomene the pompous scene,
 “ Where she *was wont* to reign th' unrivall'd Queen ;

“ And

“ And all the ardours of heroic love,
 “ To wander, lonely, thro’ this gloomy grove ?
 “ Are hollow murmurs, from the sea-beat shore,
 “ The dismal death-bell, and the torrents roar,
 “ With the fell shriekings of the boding owl,
 “ Are *these* sad sounds more soothing to the soul,
 “ Than the sweet notes of minstrelsy and song,
 “ The buzzing raptures of the list’ning throng ;
 “ Or, from full boxes, the inspiring sound,
 “ Of loud and long applauses echoing round ?
 “ Can the pale light of Luna’s vapourish rays,
 “ The low’ring clouds, or horror cloathed face
 “ Of giant rocks, and of the gloomy wood ;
 “ Of shapeless shadows, and the frowning flood,
 “ With all the start’ling imag’ry of night,
 “ Can *these* appear more pleasing to thy sight,
 “ Than the bright lustre’s joy-inspiring blaze,
 “ Join’d with the precious diamond’s brilliant rays,
 “ Than

" Than thy high titles, thy rich robes of state,
 " And all the dazzling splendors of the great,
 " Than crowds who flock thy well-feign'd woes to hear,
 " And birth, and beauty, melting at thy tear!--
 " Hush in thy bosom these tempestuous sighs,
 " And shake these fullen sorrows from thy eyes;
 " Let thy kind soul thy sister's triumphs join,
 " And add, by sympathy, thy joys, to mine!--
 " For *this* I sought thee in this dismal grove,
 " By pity soften'd, and impell'd by love.--
 " What tho' a polish'd, and enlighten'd age,
 " Gives *me* the highest honors of the stage,
 " And, leagu'd with *Farce*, the crouded boxes grace
 " The pointed archness of my comic face?
 " What tho' our mimick'ries have reach'd thy page,
 " Burlesqu'd the thunders of thy lofty rage;
 " Blunted thy dagger in the heroine's breast,
 " And turn'd thy high impassion'd griefs to jest?

" At

" At intervals thou shalt step between
 " Us, and our mirth, and rule the tragic scene ;
 " Tho' wicked Wits thy virtuous woes despise,
 " And well-bred Belles look on with laughing eyes,
 " Great Aldermen shall still thy rants revere,
 " And Bow-street Beauties blubber tear for tear."---

She, sneering, said, and on her scoffing tongue
 Loud acclamations, from the various throng
 Waited tumultuous, that the welkin round
 Echo'd, like thunder, to the deaf'ning sound.---
 Lovely as faded day, when shadowy night
 Begins to pilfer his last purple light,
 With glowing cheek Melpomene arose,
 In ruin great, and graceful 'midst her woes ;
 With high disdain the happy scoffer ey'd,
 Resum'd her lofty air, and thus replied :

" Ungenerous Tauntor ! Cou'd not this lone shade
 " Be ev'n a refuge from thy malice made ?

D

" Must

" Must thy unfeeling spirit my repose
 " *Still* trouble, and *still* triumph in my woes ?
 " Nor love, nor pity drew thy footsteps here
 " To hush my sighs, and wipe the flowing tear,
 " But the poor rancour of thy narrow heart,
 " Alike the slave of envy, and of art.
 " Yet, wretched as I am ! despis'd, disgrac'd !
 " And on my throne a vile usurper plac'd,
 " Still shall my soul look down, with scorn, on thee,
 " For still I virtuous am, and still am free :
 " Still can I hold, aloft, my neck unbroke,
 " With the base weight of an apostate's yoke ;
 " Nor tho' my wrongs may vex, can they controul
 " My inborn worth, and dignity of soul ;
 " Nor all my mis'ries, sink me half so low,
 " As to the Idols thou ador'st, to bow.---
 " View that mean Trifler seated by thy side,
 " And as thou view'st her, curb thy empty pride :
 " Look on the rabble-rout round her, and thee,
 " Then learn to scorn thyself, and reverence me.

" Is

" Is this vile crew Thalia's wonted train,
 " And *this* the chosen partner of her reign ?
 " Do Farce, and Folly over *all* preside,
 " Direct her tongue, and all her actions guide ?
 " Wretches like these her fond attention claim,
 " And sway, at once, her Reason and her Fame !
 " Degen'rate maid ! not thus thou rul'st the scene
 " When polish'd manners mark'd thy sprightly mien ;
 " When, barb'd by justice, thy keen arrows hit,
 " Nor Truth, nor Feeling, fell a prey to Wit :
 " When in thy glass, as in a living page,
 " Appear'd the faithful picture of the age,
 " And Vice, and Folly, pourtray'd by thy art,
 " Glar'd to improve, and not corrupt the heart :
 " When Humour did not wear an Attic's face,
 " Nor temperate Mirth was turn'd to low Grimace ;
 " And when thy cheek, at times, was proud to wear
 " The graceful meltings of my borrow'd tear.

" But

" But glut thy malice, which with restless rage
 " Strove long to blast my honors on the stage :
 " Thy envy glut, which from their lofty throne,
 " Rejoic'd to drag, with me, the Virtues down :
 " Still court the smiles of an abandon'd race,
 " Thro' Farce's vigor shew thy mimic face,
 " Pervert the taste, and feelings of the age,
 " With Ridicule, drive Genius from the stage.
 " Still boast thy follies, and be still pursu'd,
 " By the contempt of all the wise, and good ;
 " Live the base tool of this detested crew,
 " And with thy hatred still my steps pursue,
 " Whilst I shall still despise, and pity thee,
 " As more apostate to thyself, than me.---
 " If ever at thy shrine, in former days,
 " My touching Cibber offer'd grateful praise,
 " My Pritchard's energy thy favor won,
 " Or matchless Garrick made thee all his own ;

" O ! Nature,

" O ! Nature, Nature ! powerful Goddeſs, hear !
 " Attend, and grant thy wretched ſuppliant's pray'r !
 " Alike with me, insulted, and disgrac'd,
 " Let not the triumph of theſe wretches laſt !
 " Aſſert thy rights, and let a nation ſee
 " They rev'rence merit, when they rev'rence thee :
 " Thy honors, with my dignities, reſtore,
 " And let Buffoons invade our realms no more ! "

Scarce thro' her roſy lips, her ardent pray'r
 Aſcended on the viewleſs wings of air,
 When floods of glory burſt upon her ſight,
 Burning the ſable ſtole of ſhrinking Night ;
 While, ſailing awful thro' the blazing ſky,
 A heavenly Figure met the dazzled eye,
 Rob'd in the various Graces that are given,
 T' embellish Earth, or deck the cope of Heaven.
 Enthron'd 'midſt rolling orbs of living flame,
 Than Seraphs brighter, the bright Being came ;

E

Slow

Slow as she mov'd, from one fair hand she pour'd
 Of blushing Fruits, and Flow'rs, an endless hoard;
 Her other hand, a boundless Cestus bore,
 The wond'rous emblem of her wond'rous pow'r!
 Whose circle seem'd, in one vast round to tie,
 The distant regions of the earth and sky:
 Extatic Harmonies, to Earth unknown,
 Issu'd from every side her starry throne,
 And Fragrances, that sham'd the spicy East,
 Breath'd from her flowing hair, and hover'd round her breast.
 Aw'd at the sight, Thalia hung her head,
 And quick, with all her clamorous comrades fled.
 'Twixt heav'n and earth, th' august appearance staid
 In state sublime! And thus the prostrate maid,
 With tones whose melody this nether frame
 Wants notes to imitate, and words to name,
 Breathing celestial odours, kind address:
 " Mov'd by the throbbing anguish of thy breast,

" I come,

" I come, Melpomene, to sooth thy woes,
 " And hush the stormy sorrows to repose.
 " Let not the mumm'ries of this low-born race,
 " Whose tricks *my* pow'r, far more than *thine* disgrace,
 " Disturb thy soul, for soon their mimic art
 " Shall lose its influence o'er the public heart:
 " The day approaches, when thy eye shall trace,
 " Delighted! all my charms in SIDDON's face,
 " The while her soft, and energetic tongue,
 With all my sweetness, all my pathos strung,
 " The noblest thoughts, with nobler tones shall grace,
 " And lend each author's sense, a brighter face.
 " In all her motions shall the Graces move,
 " 'Midst Joy, or Sorrow, 'midst Disdain, or Love,
 " And all the various passions pointed lie,
 " Within the magic circle of her eye.
 " Bright as her charms, and lofty as her mien,
 " Her talents shall illustrate every scene:

" No

" No pompous paces, and no studied start,
 " Shall speak the tutorings of th' adultress art;
 " No labour'd emphasis offend the ear,
 " Nor turgid accent speak the actress near,
 " But just conception shall with spirit join,
 " Simplicity, with energy combine;
 " With ease united, dignity shall charm,
 " And fire, with feeling blended, *doubly* warm;
 " While Sensibility, thro' every part,
 " Shall thrill in all the pulses of her heart;
 " Throw a soft tremb'ling lustre o'er the whole,
 " And grace the best emotions of the soul.---
 " Disdainful of those little arts that bind,
 " In slavish trammels, the inferior mind,
 " No stage finessè her action shall disgrace,
 " To trick a generous audience out of praise;
 " But Truth, and Nature, shall still plead her cause,
 " And win the tribute of a *just* applause.

" No

" No mimic Mirror e'er shall lend its rays
 " To point the Passions on her lovely face ;
 " Nor pourtray'd on its shining front be seen,
 " Her studied attitudes, and practis'd mien ;
 " But trusting to her Judgment, strong and clear,
 " And the bright images imprinted there,
 " Trusting thro' every shade, of every part,
 " To the warm impulse of a feeling heart,
 " Her proud attempts no tameness shall disgrace,
 " Nor shall they wear a Copy's servile face ;
 " But free-born *Genius* shall attend their state,
 " And all shall shine, original, and great.---
 " As the fine Painter, who with choice design
 " Attempts to image some rare scene of mine,
 " His glowing colours blends, with nicest art,
 " And gives becoming force to every part ;
 " *Here* graceful throws his shade, and *there* his light,
 " And makes the darker tints set off the bright ;

" When faithful, warm, and great the whole he sees,
 " Precision join'd to fire, and force to ease,
 " Adds numberless soft touches at the last,
 " The rarest efforts of his skill and taste !
 " To throw a finish'd lustre o'er the whole,
 " And make it breathe my animating soul ;
 " So, to the Glories of her high Design,
 " My SIDDONS shall those nameless graces join,
 " Whose lively touches shall the whole compleat,
 " And make the finish'd scene correctly great ;
 " That fiction, seeming banish'd from the part,
 " Like truth shall strike the *well*-deluded heart.
 " Thus shall her beauty, and her powers combine
 " To raise thy merits, while they blazon mine ;
 " At once delight, and mend a wond'ring age,
 " Assert the injur'd honors of the stage ;
 " With added glory, all the rights restore,
 " And suffer Farce to sway the Town no more.

" Surprising

" Surpassing Cibber, in each tender scene,
 " And moving more than Pritchard's self the Queen ;
 " With Oldfield's comic powers, and witching face,
 " And sprightly Abington's enchanting grace,
 " Her varied excellence, alike shall twine,
 " Thalia's laurels round her head, with thine ;
 " Not even to Garrick's shall *her* Genius bow,
 " But struggle for the honors on his brow :---
 " While still the real virtues of her heart
 " Shall throw their light o'er each fictitious part,
 " With *lasting* lustre sparkle round her name,
 " And crown with heavenly glory, earthly Fame."---

She said, and saying, vanish'd from the sight,
 Leaving her wonted shades to cowering Night.
 Restor'd to peace, Melpomene arose,
 And left the dismal scenes that fed her woes,
 Wishing, and panting for the happy day,
 When matchless SIDDONS shou'd restore her sway ;
 Touch with her pathos, a misguided age,
 And bring her back, in TRIUMPH, to the stage.

11 7 49

T H E E N D.

" Surpassing Cibber, in each tender scene;
 " And moving more than Richard's fell the Queen;
 " With Oldfeld's comic powers, and winking face,
 " And sprightly Abington's enchanting grace,
 " Her varied excellences, alike shall shine;
 " Thais's laurels round her head, with thine;
 " Not even to Garrick's shall we Gaius bow,
 " But struggle for the honors on his brow:—
 " While still the real virtues of her heart
 " Shall throw their light o'er each fictitious part;
 " With *Amy* laurels round her name,
 " And crown with heavenly glory, earthly fame:—
 She said, and saying, vanish'd from the stage,
 Leaving her wounded shades to cowering *Melchior*.
 Restor'd to peace, *Melchior* arose,
 And left the dismal scenes that led her woes,
 Willing, and panting for the happy day,
 When matchless *Sidonius* should restore her way;
 Touch with her patches, a mangled age,
 And bring her back, in *Triumph*, to the stage.

T H E E N D.